

*Sumner*

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

February 13, 1957

Dr. Joshua Lederberg,  
Department of Genetics,  
University of Wisconsin,  
Madison 6, Wisconsin.

Dear Joshua:

Congratulations on the two offers. Neither one came as a surprise to me for I knew about the Stanford situation and suspected that the Berkeley one would also develop. I am mainly pleased to see that people in respected positions and first class institutions are waking up and going into action in so far as you are concerned. Of course the best thing would be for us to be able to talk about these things. Lacking that possibility I feel there are a few things I would like to tell you, all of which may have occurred to you already.

First of all in regard to what I may have said previously, I now feel that the consideration about having a reputation of being immovable from Wisconsin is unimportant. I certainly don't think you should let that weigh very heavily in your decision. If you were 45 years old or more this might be important, but certainly not at your age. In my mind a reputation a person has about being immovable, if he is <sup>as good as you are</sup>, would mean nothing; and surely not to those who really want him, for they would try to move him; and you would not want to go unless you were really wanted that much.

I fully agree that Berkeley looks better than Stanford. However, in comparing Berkeley with Wisconsin there are three things which you should, among others, think about. First: try to estimate how solidly you personally would stand in relation to the administration and how this might affect their meeting of your expanding ~~tasks~~ <sup>needs</sup>. Second: how important is it to you what colleagues are around you. If this is important, then of course you have to weigh the Berkeley group with your own at Wisconsin. Third: I believe you should inquire into the business aspects at Berkeley. By that I mean the expected routine, (distractions), such as committees including graduate student committees and also program planning for graduate students. I have heard that the required program for Zoologists at Berkeley is very extensive. Whether this would be true in your department I do not of course know. You do not mention whether in either case the offer included a chairmanship or whether the possibility of having to serve a term as chairman would be in the offing. I sincerely hope you do not let yourself into anything of that kind.

The new deal at Wisconsin looks very attractive, particularly from what appears to be your point of view and I can see how you would find the thought of pulling away from it difficult to absorb. On the other hand, if you are going to pull away, Berkeley, in my opinion, would be one of the few places worth going to. It is difficult to face this decision, believe me, and I fully appreciate what it means to have to go through such decision-making. I think this is one of the fortunate cases, however, in which either decision

is unlikely to be a bad one. Because of that, I don't think you should let yourself be in too much of a stew for too long. In all probability either way you decide will work out well for you. That is the loveliest kind of a dilemma in which to be.

Thanks for the little gadget you sent. We are familiar with it and thus far have not thought it particularly suitable for our purposes.

Thanks very much for sending your research report along. I have not yet read it because at present I am using all my reading time for study of genetics of algae and fungi. This is my semester for GOM and these are the subjects this year. Pretty soon I must decide how to use Moewus and how much of his work can legitimately be presented or legitimately omitted. What would you think if you were presenting a genetics course of algae and wanted to do a comprehensive and thorough job of it--or at least as much as you can do in about 10 or 12 lectures--what proportion would you let Moewus have? Don't bother to answer this question unless it appeals to you.

It looks as if you have a wonderful year ahead. I am going to be on sabbatical next year too, but probably will not leave this country. I too have been bogged down in writing, but finally got off an enormous paper on Breeding Systems for a symposium being edited by Ernst Mayr for AAAS. I found this a fascinating job and hope very much that you will find something of interest in it.

With best wishes to you and Esther for a wonderful trip,

Cordially yours,

*T. M. Sonneborn*  
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*Since dictating this, your reprints arrived & I look forward to studying them. In re your decisions, one more word. My impression has been that you are fully appreciated and liked at Wisconsin. This is -- or would be to me -- very important in making a choice. Nothing can so distract and annoy as petty jealousies and antagonisms. If Berkeley does not offer in itself clear and weighty advantages (among which I'd exclude the demolition of the immovable idea), the assurance of congenial colleagues and working conditions at Wisconsin vs their uncertainty at Berkeley is something not to pass over lightly.*

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